

## GENERAL COMMENTS

This year's camp of Les Voyageurs can boast the largest enrollment of its three year history as forty boys benefitted from the "bush" experience. Twenty-five boys were present for the first period operation while fifteen attended the second period. As twenty-five is the capacity of the camp it can be seen that we were ten short during the second period. We feel this situation may be rectified by a more elaborate promotion program, and also by changing the periods so that the four week period is the first period. A more comprehensive presentation of our feelings with regards to the changing of periods can be found on the tape recording of our evaluation session.

We were faced with a particularly trying problem during the first period this summer when we were "locked" in the "bush" for twelve days as a result of the dangerous fire hazard situation. The restrictions placed on us made it extremely difficult to operate the camp within the framework intended. Although lunch fires were forbidden, we were able to use our Trail Stove and the Coleman Stove. With these facilities it would have been a relatively simple matter to cook for the whole camp as one group, but this would have defeated the idea of autonomous groups. Therefore, each group did its own cooking, arranging their own menus at allotted times, thus maintaining a certain amount of autonomy.

Program during the forest closing was a big problem when you consider that our philosophy for this camp does not lend itself to the planning of organized program. To plan

*Les V  
Annual Report  
1963*

some program would have been the easy way out, but it would have defeated our purpose. In following the camp's purpose, we therefore left each group to provide their own entertainment. Needless to say, adequate guidance was provided when and where necessary. This guidance was in most cases only necessary during the early days of the period - during the time when the boys were adjusting to the type of programming we were attempting to stimulate. The type of programming or philosophy we were attempting to stimulate may be described as follows:-

It appears that more and more of today's boys have programs planned for them - agencies provide recreation for them, team sports are planned for them, in some cases parents allot responsibilities to them, and in many camps a Program Director sets down a program they are to follow. Our idea at ~~Camp~~ Les Voyageurs has been to help the boy use his own initiative within a group setting in the "bush". Our program is merely "living in the bush" and it is hoped that this fulfills the goals set by both campers and parents. (i.e) having fun while learning and growing.

Following the ideas of programming mentioned above proved very frustrating at times due to the extended stay in a confined area, but eventually, all crews took on a large project to busy themselves with. It is interesting to note that in practically every case the idea for the project came from the boys themselves. One such project was a Giant Water Swing, (apparently a great success) an idea which couldn't



possibly originate anywhere but in the imaginative group mind of five adolescents.

When the forests finally opened, we only had eight days of camp in which to do some tripping. Naturally trips were short, but nevertheless successful, thus providing a satisfactory climax to the first period of this summer's camp.

The second period of camp ran very smoothly without problems such as forest closing. As mentioned above, we only had three groups. Each group first took a short orientation trip of about five days' duration following which a longer trip was taken consisting of sixteen to eighteen days. On this longer trip one crew set up their own base camp on a secluded lake and spent most of their time at this site. This arrangement worked out extremely well as the group was able to do true "bush" camping and at the same time have ample opportunity to enjoy and appreciate their surroundings. (i.e) Indian encampments, and nature signs such as wolf tracks, beaver teeth etc. These are many of the experiences that are missed by other crews who spend considerable time tripping, but it should be realized that this type of arrangement was successful probably because of the older age and ~~superior~~ *more advanced* maturity of this particular group. With a different type of group this sort of trip may not have been as successful.

One of the other crews did very little tripping during the long trip but moved from site to site, spending considerable time at each site. Once again this was satisfactory for this particular crew, but it may not have worked for another.

Neither of the trips mentioned above would have been satisfactory for the third crew, and in view of this they took a very long and rough trip. The trip tended to bring the crew together into a more closely working group which was the desired result.

#### CAMPER GROWTH

Camper growth is very difficult to measure objectively. To the best of our ability we hope our objectives for the campers covered all of the YMCA's "Values for Living". However, our emphasis, which were four in number, may sound a bit different. Our emphasis was placed on inter-dependency, self discipline (as opposed to discipline administered by a leader), socially comfortable (gaining of confidence in one's self), and stimulating some thinking for one's self about life in general. As mentioned above, to adequately measure success in these areas is practically impossible with the tools we have. However, the staff as a whole discussed the growth of each individual thus providing outside observers. Also, the Director had sessions with each tripper in the hopes that camper growth may be evaluated. We strongly feel that considerable camper growth was realized, not losing sight of the fact that our findings are very subjective. The Director, as an outside observer, feels he saw considerable positive growth, particularly in the second period.



### STAFF

Although in any operation, the calibre of the staff is important to the success of the operation, we may say that this is doubly so with ~~Camp~~ Les Voyageurs. The reason for saying this is fairly obvious. Because of the autonomous operation of the groups, the lack of close supervision, and the small size of the camp, a "weak link" cannot be absorbed by stronger staff members. Also, because of the inability of staff members to enjoy the occasional day off in a completely new setting away from the responsibilities of the job, morale is extremely important. In view of these facts, the importance of high calibre staff cannot be over emphasized.

With only one exception, this year's staff filled the above requirements perfectly. Alex Ross, who was with us for only the first period, was the youngest member of our staff, and although his intentions were good, and he possessed an extreme desire to turn in a good job, he was nevertheless unable to grasp the philosophy we were attempting to put forth. This may have been no fault of his, but might rather have been the result of inadequate supervision, supervision being very difficult in a "bush" camp setting. This would underline the required high calibre of staff as was mentioned above.

Of the four remaining Trippers it would be next to impossible to choose one over the other in so far as performance was concerned. Each one had a slightly different way of operating, and the atmosphere created by the flexibility of autonomous groups lended itself to this individuality, resulting in an excellent job done by all.

Keith Lewis, with the camp for a second term, more or less handled the job of Assistant Camp Director. Although this was not his official title, he did fall into this position. Keith is an excellent "bushman" and very capable in organizing the camp where organization is necessary. He was perhaps the greatest asset to all mechanical aspects of the camp. Also, his ability to work with adolescents was shown in the success he had with his group.

Frank Carpenter was also serving a second term with the camp having been on the Base Camp Staff two years previously. Although Frank took a crew only in the first period, he was definitely not relieved of these duties in the second period because he was a weak member on the staff. Quite to the contrary, Frank turned in an excellent job with particular credit going to his success with the group during the forest closing. The reason Frank was chosen to remain in Base Camp during the second period was because his personality fitted in best with the Director's. Frank has a profound understanding of the philosophy of the camp and is able to put his understanding to good use in a group. Also, Frank possesses considerable knowledge of the surrounding area and contacts as a result of his close relationship with the Director in the second period and because of his Base Camp position two years ago. In view of these above qualifications it is strongly recommended that he be procured for next year's staff as he would be invaluable to the new Director.

Rusty McKay came to us from Western University following several years experience at Kamp Kanawana. He was quick to catch



on to the philosophy of the camp and very conscientious in working with his group. He was greatly concerned with being able to accomplish some worthwhile growth with his boys and I would say that he certainly achieved satisfactory results. Rusty was perhaps being a bit idealistic in setting his goals for the group, and therefore found it difficult to accept the shortcomings of the group, but nevertheless, this over sensitivity of his seemed to pay off in the end as he was very effective in finding the problem areas, and seemed reasonably satisfied with the end result. The Director was certainly satisfied.

We might consider Bob McNeil as an experiment. Last year we hired a Tripper with a great deal of skills in the bush but lacking in experience working with youth. The results were very discouraging. This year we hired Bob who was completely lacking in camp skills, but had experience working with youth through his Physical Education course at Western University. Also, Bob came out very favorable on Dr. Dimock's attitude scale of Counselor prediction. Although Bob appeared apathetic at the beginning, we were quick to learn that this was just his manner while warming up to his new environment. He spent considerable time reading about camping and conversing with fellow staff members in an effort to acquire camp skills during the training days prior to camp's opening, and his particular type of personality certainly made it possible for him to continue learning from his boys once camp got under way. Thanks to his desire to learn, and his ability to grasp and put into effect the philosophy of the camp, Bob turned in an excellent job. Although Bob's case

may emphasise the importance of experience and understanding in working with youth, I would not suggest that we can draw any conclusions from the fact that he was unskilled in camping. Bob picked up camping skills easily, but this was probably because of his strong interest in physical activity, ~~and~~ his co-ordination due to his own physical activities, and both these coupled with a keen and imaginative mind.

I would strongly recommend Bob, Rusty, Frank and Keith for staff positions next year.

The two Base Camp positions, which were created this year, worked out very well. Pete Marosi, a three year old Les Voyageurs camper from Montreal, and Tom Sides, a one year old camper from Conn., were hired for these positions. As this was a new position, their job description had to be very flexible until such time that it became clear in our minds what their duties should be. A job description was laid down before camp commenced, but it was found that many changes and clarifications had to be made as camp progressed thru such abnormal conditions as forest closing. The reason for the concern regarding a definite job description was to prevent the Base Camp boys from becoming a couple of "Joe Boys". In view of this they were given definite responsibilities such as complete control of food and its issue, and aiding the Director in general care and upkeep of the Base Camp plant and equipment. The Director found these boys to be of particular value as companions while crews were on the trail, and more important, in remembering and helping with many of the details involved in this or any operation, as the Director was at times



prone to overlook some of the details. However, they too failed to remember the correct date for the opening of camp. The Base Camp boys were also involved in any discussions or meetings held by the other staff and they made many concrete and worthwhile contributions. To sum up, the Base Camp boys' job may well be described as a job for the purpose of aiding the Director in the operation of the Base Camp set-up so that the Director may be relieved from many of the mechanical aspects of directing the camp, thus leaving him free to devote more of his time to administrating and supervising. These two Base Camp positions proved invaluable to the successful operation of the camp and it is strongly recommended that they be retained next year.

Tom and Pete were particularly fine choices for the Base Camp positions this year because of their familiarity with the camp and their willingness to do their share. Tom was particularly sharp and capable, and he also possesses a fine personality coupled with a helpful attitude towards staff and campers alike. His unselfish and unbiased attitude towards kids would be worth remembering in considering future Kanawana or Les Voyageurs staff.

NOTE:- For Base Camp staff next year I would like to recommend Jim Legein. I was Jim's Tripper one summer and worked with him in a Hi-Y club for one winter. He was a camper this year with Frank Carpenter. I know him to possess a great deal of initiative, a very necessary qualification for the position of Base Camp Boy, and his personality is

such that he would be desirable to have around for the ten week period. Knowing a great deal about Jim's personal life, homelife and problems, I would say an experience as Base Camp Boy working in close connection with the Director would be most beneficial to Jim in helping him to sort out his attitudes and set of values. I am sure the new Director would find him a very fine choice for the position, and I ask that at the very least, Jim be given every consideration.

#### BASE CAMP

This year the Base Camp site was moved from Lac Nanouaton to the lower end of Lac Landron. Much of the appeal this area offers was described in last year's report, and following a summer's experience in the area, we found it more than lived up to expectations. However, it does have one disadvantage - it is quite a distance from the main highway. This presents a problem in transporting the campers from the Barriere Gate to Lac Landron. This year we transported the boys with our own truck, but it is obvious that this is extremely hard on the truck and also very inconvenient when you consider the time element. It is our suggestion that an all out effort be made to charter a bus for the trip, and this should be done early in the year. Edgar Moore in Maniwaki or Romeo in St. Sauveur are two people to consider. A bus could bring the boys



within three or less miles from the Base Camp landing.

Because Lac Landron is ideal as a Base Camp set-up, it is strongly recommended that immediate steps be taken to obtain a lease for the area.

Base Camp facilities were found to be most adequate for this summer's operation.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promotion this year was stepped up considerably from last year, but there is still much desire for more active and earlier promotion.
2. Arrangements should be made early in the year to charter a bus for the purpose of transporting campers closer to the Base Camp landing.
3. A few books should be purchased to be made available to campers. (ie) camp craft, nature lore, sex etc. Many such books were in the camp this year, but they belonged to Trippers, and although they were available to campers, I am not sure the campers were aware of this.
4. A lease for the Lac Landron area should be obtained immediately.
5. Food issue and evaluation forms should be revised and brought up to date regarding changes in some types of food, elimination of others, and adding of new types. The system for issuing food this year was found to be most satisfactory, and before the forms are revised, it is suggested that this system be gone over with a previous staff member so that the best possible form might be devised to suit the intended

purpose. Frank Carpenter or Pete Marosi would be most familiar with the problems of food issuing. See appendix for the two types of sheets presently being used. We feel these two sheets might be combined so that only one type of sheet would be necessary.

6. Jack Organ proposed a crest for Les Voyageurs complete with a legend. It is hoped that serious consideration will be given to the adoption of this crest. We recommend that this crest be made of high grade felt and not be so large as to take away from its prestige.